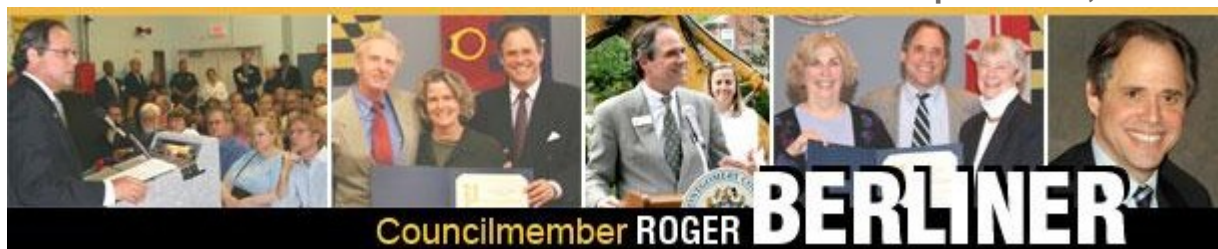


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September 8, 2010



## *The Berliner Brief*

**Dear District 1 Residents and Friends,**

Whether you're adjusting to the schedule of a new school year or preparing to celebrate the High Holy Days with family, I wanted to share a few quick thoughts and developments from the Council.

The thought I wanted to share with you is aptly captured by a quote from Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis: "The most important political office is that of the private citizen." As the upcoming primary election approaches, your mailboxes have undoubtedly been flooded with mailers from various elected officials running for the privilege of representing you in various positions. I do hope that you take a moment - or several - to be engaged in the process. Whether a Republican or Democrat, exercising our right to vote is one of the simplest yet most important civic duties we have. And so I encourage you, either at an [early voting location](#) or on [September 14](#), make your voice heard with the greatest microphone of all: your vote.

Sincerely,

Roger Berliner  
Councilmember, District 1

### **Spending Disclosure Website Goes Live**

Back in February of 2009, I was the chief sponsor of a bill that led to the creation of a new website that will allow the public to search and view information on government expenditures over \$25,000. I was grateful that this legislation, modeled after similar federal legislation sponsored by then-Senator Obama, was co-sponsored by Councilmembers Phil Andrews, Marc Elrich, Valerie Ervin, and Duchy Trachtenberg, and passed unanimously by the Council.

As of September 1, the spending disclosure bill has now been fully implemented and the searchable website is now available to residents. The new website can be accessed from the County's Department

of Finance home page by clicking on "Spending Disclosure" under Quick Links. The direct link is: <http://www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/spendingdisclosure/>. Details of Bill 1-09 can be found [here](#).

It is important to keep our government open and transparent to those who want to know where their tax dollars are being spent. This website takes another major step toward meeting this goal. We want to be accountable to our residents.

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## Pepco

As you'll recall, there was a robust public hearing at the Council Office Building on August 30. In case you weren't able to watch, the Council has made the entire evening available [here](#). In addition, if you would like to see my presentation to the Maryland Public Service Commission, please click [here](#).

A status conference is scheduled for October 12th and we should understand from there how long the independent performance assessment, also called for by the Commission, will take.




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## An Update on the Organizational Reform Commission

The eight member volunteer citizen Commission, jointly appointed by the County Council and the County Executive has had several fact finding meetings in August and September. It is gathering information in order to meet the charge of submitting "a status report of its progress to the Council and the Executive outlining its progress to date and its work plan through January 31, 2011."

The Commission, co-chaired by Vernon Ricks and Richard Wegman, has received presentations from the Executive Branch, represented by the Chief Executive Officer, and the Office of Management and Budget. The County Council Staff Director and the Council's Office of Legislative Oversight also discussed County budgetary structure issues.

Subsequently, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC), Montgomery College, and Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) were invited to address a series of questions related to budgetary and organizational issues.

Meetings are scheduled with county stake holders from a broad spectrum from employee unions to civic groups, major non-profit providers, and agencies. They have already met through August and into September, and gathered an impressive portfolio of documents to read and issues to ponder.

I thank them for their service to date and look forward with anticipation to their initial recommendations.

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## Incident at the Discovery Channel Building

I'd like to commend our Police Department and Fire & Rescue Service for their extraordinary efforts on September 1 as the frightening incident at the Discovery Channel building unfolded in Silver Spring. I think we are all grateful that Discovery Channel staff and the children from the Discovery Kids Place were unharmed thanks to their heroic efforts. Police Chief Manger and Fire & Rescue Chief Bowers are outstanding leaders who have outstanding forces that work hard each and every day to keep us safe.

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## Odds and Ends

**September is National Preparedness Month:** September is National Preparedness Month, and residents are encouraged to be prepared for severe weather and other emergencies. With two more months remaining in the 2010 hurricane season, additional storms could still bring high winds, flooding and power outages to the area. Anyone who has not already signed up for the County's Alert Montgomery notification system is encouraged to do so by going to <https://alert.montgomerycountymd.gov> and selecting the types of emergency alerts they are interested in receiving regarding weather, severe traffic, schools, park and government facilities, athletic fields and public events; along with the devices they would like the messages sent to (cell phones, text pagers, wireless PDAs, home and work emails).

**Community Shredding Event:** The Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Solid Waste Services has announced that residents can shred personal confidential papers free of charge at the next NBC4 Safe & Secure Community Shred event to be on Saturday, September 11 from 8 to 11 a.m. at the Montgomery College's Rockville Campus, Lot #13 at the intersection of Route 355 (Hungerford Dr.) and Mannakee St. Residents may bring up to five cardboard boxes and/or paper bags of personal papers for shredding. For more information, click [here](#).

**Board of Education Requests Community Comment:** The Montgomery County Board of Education is seeking comments from the community on Policy FKB, Modernization/Renovation. This policy sets forth the guidelines to establish a systematic approach for replacement of building systems and facilities. The focus of the policy should shift to sustaining schools in good condition through systematic life-cycle asset replacement, as well as modernization. The proposed revisions acknowledge that improved initial construction methods now enable MCPS to extend the useful life of school buildings and the length of time before full modernization/replacement of schools is required. You can access this policy at <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdfcomment/FKBcomment.pdf>. Individuals who wish to provide comments should respond in writing by October 29, 2010.

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## Calling All Community Leaders

Civic and Homeowner Associations: In order to disseminate timely information that may be useful to your communities and neighborhoods, we would like to keep a comprehensive and updated database of District 1 civic and homeowners associations. Please help us by calling 240-777-7828 or emailing us at [councilmember.berliner@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:councilmember.berliner@montgomerycountymd.gov) anytime with the name of your organization, the current president's name, e-mail address, street address and phone number. We promise to use the contact information judiciously and will not share it with any other parties.

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## My Office

As always, my staff and I look forward to hearing from you and to seeing you at community events.

**Cindy Gibson** is my Chief of Staff and handles land use; **Susan Buffone** focuses on transportation, environmental, and energy issues; **Lou D'Ovidio** follows Public Safety and Management and Fiscal Policy Committee issues; **Chad Bolt** focuses on Health & Human Services Committee and Education Committee issues; and **Beth Sylvester** handles constituent service, manages my busy calendar, and is the friendly voice on the other end of the phone when you call our office. All of them will try to facilitate your interaction with County government in any way that they can.

Thank you for your trust, and please let me know what I can do for you. It is truly a privilege to do this work, and I thank you for the opportunity.

Roger Berliner  
Councilmember  
District 1

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